

MEMO

DATE: November 21, 2019

SUBJECT: Libya Weekly Update

Below is a summary of the latest top headlines of the week surrounding the news in Libya. Key highlights include:

- The United States Department of State issued its strongest warning yet regarding Haftar's attack on Tripoli and the legitimate government of Tripoli. The State Department called on Haftar to end his offensive on Tripoli in an effort to work towards a diplomatic solution.
- Russia continues to expand its military footprint in Libya, with reports of 1,400 mercenaries linked to Putin and working on the ground for General Haftar in varying capacities. This changes the nature of the fight on the ground, breaks international embargoes, and grows the current proxy war.
- Haftar's LNA forces struck a *civilian* biscuit factory near Tripoli, killing ten workers. This institutes yet another war crime committed by Haftar's forces as the conflict continues.

Reuters (11/15): [U.S. Calls on Libya's Haftar to Halt Tripoli War, Warns Against Russia's Role](#)

- The US State Department issued a warning to General Haftar's LNA to end his offensive on Tripoli.
- This latest statement has been the strongest US statement since Russian mercenaries were seen on the ground working for Haftar.

The Guardian (11/15): [US accuses Russia of exploiting conflict in Libya](#)

- With fears of Russian influence growing in Libya, the United States Department of State issued a warning to General Haftar.
- The US called on the LNA to end the offensive on Tripoli in an effort to further US-Libya cooperation and prevent foreign interference.

Axios (11/14): [Russia now on front lines of Libya's "proxy war," interior minister says](#)

- The US State Department has officially indicated support for the GNA, but has not played a part in the war beyond calling for diplomatic solutions.
- Russian mercenaries continue to operate in Libya, working for General Haftar's LNA, which is changing the nature of the war.
- US non-engagement after the removal of Gaddafi in 2011 has lead to an unfolding proxy war, which is now being influenced by the Russians.

Washington Post (11/18): [Russians arrested as spies in Libya worked for Russian firm Wagner, official says](#)

- The GNA have arrested two Russian spies on the ground in Libya.
- The two Russians arrested were employed by the Russian Wagner Group.

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- This new approach to the Libya conflict in Russia is similar to what Russia has done in Syria and the Ukraine, employing various means to advance their interest.

Libya Express (11/16): [Number of Russian mercenaries fighting for Haftar in Libya rises to 1400, report says](#)

- The number of Russian mercenaries on the ground has risen to 1,400 troops involved in the fight.
- These troops are directly involved, operating artillery, flying planes, training and supporting troops.
- The US statement to General Haftar to end his offensive, calling for a diplomatic solution, also is aimed at preventing Russia from exploiting the Tripoli conflict against the Libyan people.

Reuters (11/18): [Air strike hits biscuit factory in Libyan capital, killing 10](#)

- Ten factory workers near Tripoli were killed in an airstrike carried out by General Haftar's forces.
- This latest attack adds to the list of potential war crimes committed by Haftar's LNA.
- More than 200 civilians have been killed and another 128,000 have been displaced since the beginning of Haftar's offensive on Tripoli.

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